

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



March 1993

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A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

HRD Project Delivers Final Report

The B.C. Human Resource Development (HRD) Project Steering Committee has delivered its final report to the Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, Tom Perry.

The HRD Project is a two-year initiative of the MAETT, launched in January 1991 with a mandate "to develop a policy framework for the future of all forms of education, training and learning for adults in B.C." The project is supported by an 18-member steering committee, comprised of representatives from education, business, labour, the First Nations Congress, and the MAETT. The project director is Dr. Paul Gallagher.

One of nine policy areas determined by the committee in its early stages was Foundation Education, defined as including adult basic education (ABE), adult special education, English as a second language, College Preparatory, and Basic Training for Skill Development. Feedback from this field was solicited by a Foundation Education planning committee by means of working forums, regional meetings, focus groups and questionnaires.

In addition, a package inviting B.C.'s adult basic education instructors and students to respond to some of the project's recommendations was distributed to the ABE field in early September, 1992.

The report's conclusions are based on the seven essential characteristics for a policy framework identified by the committee: accessibility, equity, quality, responsiveness, comprehensiveness, accountability, and affordability. Examples of conclusions which concern Foundation Education are:

- ❖ "The need to give greater attention to adult literacy, as the foundation for all other learning, is fundamental to a learning society. The high percentage of our population without adequate reading, writing and life skills is a major obstacle to achieving our social and economic goals."
- ❖ "We urge the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education to initiate a consultative process between the school and post-school sectors to achieve the objective of a common credential for all persons completing high school programs, regardless of age or institution."

continued on page 2

"Report" from page 1

- ❖ "...a collaborative strategy to improve the quality, range and sources of information to assist adults to make appropriate learning choices is key to improving prospects for success in learning."
- ❖ "The quality of our learning system ultimately depends upon the quality of the relationship between learners and those who work with learners. We place a particularly high value on the teaching function and on those measures necessary to keep instructors and trainers current in a context of rapid change."
- ❖ "We need to make it possible for learners to change from one area of learning to another without unreasonable penalty. To do that we need ... to build bridges between programs."
- ❖ "We urge that methods of funding institutions be revised to increase the proportion of funding that is assigned to the attainment of specific objectives and outcomes consistent with institutional mandates and roles."

Approximately 7,000 copies of the report have been distributed among the constituencies of the 18 members of the Steering Committee and to the HRD

Project mailing list.

Copies are also available, free of charge, from:

HRD Project Office
Room 2000
515 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 5K3
Phone: 775-0285
Fax: 775-0291 ☐

New Initiative to Build on Plain Language Institute

The Plain Language Institute (PLI) of B.C., established in 1990 to promote plain language in law, government and business, will close on March 31, 1993.

It will be replaced, as of April 1, 1993, by a new plain language program, based in the provincial Ministry of Government Services. PLI Executive Director Phil Knight will become interim coordinator of the new program (as yet unnamed).

The new program, "will support plain language initiatives in all government ministries, boards, commissions and agencies." It will be guided by a "community-based plain language advisory committee representing legal, multicultural, aboriginal and literacy groups."

The PLI is a not-for-profit society funded jointly by the Ministry of Attorney General and the Law Foundation of B.C. During its three-year mandate to research plain language and raise public awareness, the PLI produced several surveys and reports, conducted research on the comprehension of legal documents, and held an international plain language conference in Vancouver.

It has also offered working group sessions designed to keep the public informed of the role and function of plain language in the community, and provide information on the latest developments in the field.

A final working group meeting will take place in Vancouver this month. The guest speaker will be Noelle Reeve, Acting Director of Communications for the Ministry of Government Services, who will talk about the new plain language initiative. The meeting takes place on March 23, 1993 at the People's Law School, 900 Howe Street, Vancouver, from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

For information on the new initiative (until March 31, 1993), contact:

The Plain Language Institute of B.C.
1500 - 555 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 4N6
Phone: 687-8895
Fax: 687-0018 ☐

Family Literacy in Penticton and Vancouver

A workshop on family literacy, of interest to librarians, community literacy workers, and other literacy providers, will be held in Penticton and in Vancouver next month.

"Family Literacy and Libraries: Working Together," co-sponsored by the B.C. Library Association (BCLA) and Literacy B.C., will be held at the BCLA conference in Penticton on April 22, and at Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre, Vancouver on April 24. The workshop at the BCLA conference is sponsored by Canada Post Corporation.

The workshop features two presenters: Rebecca Bauen, Literacy Coordinator, Seattle Public Library and founder of the library's weekly family literacy program; and Tracy Radford, a Seattle mother of four children who was one of the first parents to participate in the program.

Registration for both events is limited.

The deadline for the Penticton workshop is April 5, 1993.

To register, contact:

B.C. Library Association
110 - 6545 Bonsor Avenue
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 1H3
Phone: 430-9633

The deadline for the Vancouver workshop is April 2, 1993.

To register, contact:

Literacy B.C.
1128 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Phone: 687-5077
Fax: 687-5076 ☐

New ESL Post at MAETT

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) has announced a new appointment. Reena Baker becomes Coordinator, English Language Training Programs effective March 1, 1993.

Baker was previously Coordinator of Special Programs at the English Language Institute, University of British Columbia. Norma Kidd, Manager, Developmental Programs, MAETT, says that Baker, "brings with her a wealth of English as a second language experience in teaching and administration," and has "an extensive provincial ESL network."

The MAETT also announces that Mary Waddington, Provincial Literacy Coordinator, "has taken on the

added responsibility of Adult Basic Education Programs." The Literacy Coordinator has been responsible for the overall direction, development, delivery and evaluation of adult literacy programs and resources in B.C.

Contact:

Reena Baker, Coordinator
English Language Training
Programs
Developmental Programs
Urban Colleges and International
Education
Ministry of Advanced Education,
Training and Technology
2nd Floor
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684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Facsimile

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is published monthly (except as noted). It is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.



Poverty - Literacy Link: Report Recommends Action

Government policies designed to "solve" Canada's illiteracy problem must be linked to "an attack on poverty," says a study released at the end of January 1993 by Canada's National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO).

The 100-page report, *Literacy and Poverty: A View from the Inside*, contains 12 recommendations based on the study's examination of the connections between poverty, social inequality and literacy.

NAPO is a non-profit advocacy organization that represents the interests of low-income Canadians. It undertook the research project as a result of its mandate "to ensure that the views of poor people are considered during debates on pertinent national issues."

The qualitative study by three NAPO researchers involved 224 interviews -- 105 with "undereducated individuals," and the rest with "literacy teachers and activists, poverty activists, and a broad range of social service providers with low-income clients."

The interviews with undereducated individuals

ranged from those who could not read at all to those with less than a high school education. (Approximately 65% had less than Grade 9; 24% had over Grade 10.) 49 literacy programs and 70 social service agencies and advocacy groups across Canada are represented. Referrals came from community-based agencies as well as community colleges and school boards. In B.C., interviews were conducted at the Burnaby School District; the Carnegie Adult Learning Centre (Vancouver School Board); the Lakeside Correctional Centre for Women, New Westminster; and the Learning Front, a downtown Vancouver community-based program which ceased operation in 1990.

Respondents to the study identified four major barriers to participating in literacy and adult education programs: financial problems and bureaucratic roadblocks; lack of good, affordable child care; transportation difficulties; and inappropriate programs.

Two of the recommendations concern government assistance and job-training policies.

- ♦ Income security programs should remove policy and program barriers which inhibit participation in literacy training...options should not be restricted to institution-based or full-time programs, and... participation should not be time-limited.

- ♦ Better coordination is needed between literacy policy and labour adjustment and employment policies. ... Educational criteria for admission to job-training programs should be set at levels that are realistic for the skills taught....Unemployment insurance recipients who require literacy training should be able to enrol in community-based programs."

The report also recommends that:

- ♦ A significant portion of literacy funding should be allocated to community-based programs that operate at least in part outside the school system. Funding should also go to community-based organizations that wish to add a literacy training component to their work."

The full report, *Literacy and Poverty: A View from the Inside* is available at a cost of \$10.00. Corollary materials include:

Summary Report ("written in popular form, useful to literacy learners") (\$1.00)
Literacy Training for Low Income People: Some Issues and Solutions (\$5.00)
Annotated Bibliography (\$5.00)
Illiteracy and Poverty: A Factsheet (free)

For information, contact:

NAPO
 316 - 256 King Edward Avenue
 Ottawa, Ontario
 K1N 7M1
 Phone: (613) 789-0096
 Fax: (613) 789-0141 ☐

Reminder: Fairmont Conference

Registration is still open for the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. (ABEABC) conference and annual general meeting April 14-17, 1993 at Fairmont Hot Springs, B.C. This year's theme is, Doing it Right -- An Exploration of Good Practice. The conference is sponsored by the ABEABC, Selkirk College and East Kootenay Community College.

Included among the approximately 25 workshops available are:

- ◆ Good Practice in Literacy Programs
- ◆ *SkillPlan*: Addressing Good Practice in the Workforce
- ◆ Curriculum Resources for First Nations
- ◆ Making the Classroom Positive for Women
- ◆ Updates from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology.

The conference will also include a panel discussion on *Learning for the 21st Century*, the report by Dr. Ron Faris on the future direction of B.C. adult and continuing education. Representatives of colleges, school districts and community education ABE programs will take part.

To register, contact:

Marvin Work, Coordinator
Developmental Education
Selkirk College
Box 1200
Castlegar, B.C.
V1N 3J1
Phone: 365-7292 ☐

Update: Regional Professional Development and Needs Assessment Project

ABE practitioners are reminded to return the professional development questionnaire recently distributed to the ABE field on behalf of this project. The questionnaire -- phase one of the project -- was conducted to assess the PD interests of ABE/literacy practitioners.

Project coordinator Audrey Thomas says, "returns are very low for the Interior regions of the province. The biggest response to date has come from Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland." Although the March 5 return deadline has passed, Thomas says, "all those who received a questionnaire should return it to me as soon as possible, since the aim of the project is to ensure all regions are represented."

The second phase of the project will provide a series of PD workshops in eight regions of the province. Workshops in four regions are tentatively scheduled before the end of June, 1993, with another four to be held in the fall.

Funding for the project is provided by the 1992/1993 B.C. literacy cost-shared program.

For information, contact:

Audrey Thomas
Phone: 598-9218 (Victoria); or

Jim Bray, Project Supervisor
Phone: 828-5284 (Kamloops) ☐

Attention: ABEABC members

The Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. is seeking help from its membership in reorganizing its mailing list.

All ABEABC members with valid memberships (i.e. not expired) should, in addition to regular ABEABC information, be receiving the Association's professional journal, *Groundwork*, and *Fax Tracks*, a

one-page bulletin, compiled quarterly by regional representatives on a rotating basis and faxed to members.

Members who do not receive these materials regularly should contact:

Rhoda Rizkalla
ABEABC Administrative Coordinator
Phone: 926-8960
Fax: 925-3567
(West Vancouver) ☐

NEW RESOURCES

Adult Literacy Work in Canada. By Richard Darville. Toronto: Canadian Association for Adult Education (1992).

Darville, formerly of the University of British Columbia and currently a faculty member in the Department of Linguistics, Carleton University, Ottawa, has produced, "a map of the state of literacy work in Canada." The book is divided into two parts. Chapter I provides an overview, including the literacy activities and policies of federal, provincial and territorial governments. Chapter II examines issues, including, "efforts to develop a range of learner-centred and community-specific literacy programming."

In B.C., Darville cites college and school district literacy adult basic education programming, as well as the formation of the Literacy B.C. coalition of community-based organizations.

The cost of the 100-page coil-bound publication is \$19.26 (\$12.84 for Canadian Association for Adult Education members), which includes GST and postage.

To order, contact:

Canadian Association for Adult Education
29 Prince Arthur Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 1B2
Phone: (416) 964-0559
Fax: (416) 964-9226 ☐

Off the Wall - Writings from the Carnegie Adult Learning Centre (Vancouver School Board), Issue #2.

The second issue of *Off the Wall* is a 38-page compendium of poems, stories, autobiographies and opinions from 44 contributors, which reflect, "the variety of voices, ideas and histories of the people that make up the Carnegie Learning Centre." The publication is available free of charge (up to 5 copies) from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre, or contact:

Carnegie Adult Learning Centre
401 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6A 2T7
Phone: 665-3013
Fax 684-8442 ☐

Legal Services Project Funding Available

The Legal Services Society of British Columbia has 1993/1994 project funding available to B.C. community groups involved in public legal education.

The funding provides grants of up to \$4,000 to groups that, "help

explain the law or the legal system to their members or to the public." Groups funded in the past have, for example, produced pamphlets on welfare rights, family law and community legal resources, or run workshops or training sessions on legal matters.

The Society is especially interested in receiving proposals for projects aimed at groups who have difficulty gaining access to the legal system (single mothers,

newcomers, refugees, people with disabilities, etc.).

The deadline for applications is March 31, 1993.

Contact:

Legal Services Society of B.C.
PO Box 3, Suite 300
1140 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6E 4G1
Phone: 660-4600
Fax: 660-4420 ☐